

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 224

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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CINCPAC HON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17737

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CASC, VS

SUBJ: DISMAL LOT OF AMERICANS IN SAIGON

SUMMARY: AN AMCIT ARRIVING FROM SAIGON ON 22 AUGUST REPORTS THAT VIETNAMESE WIVES OF AMERICANS IN SAIGON ARE NOT BEING PERMITTED TO LEAVE VIETNAM; NEITHER THOSE PRESENTLY WITH THEIR HUSBANDS NOR THOSE HOLDING US PASSPORTS ISSUED WITHIN THE PAST SIX MONTHS. MORE THAN 10,000 ASIANS HOLDING FRENCH PASSPORTS ARE CURRENTLY WAITING PERMISSION TO LEAVE VIETNAM BUT SO FAR FEW HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO SO. THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 200 EUROPEAN FRENCH REMAINING IN SAIGON. FRENCH CHARGE D' AFFAIRES DRUMETZ IS DISTRESSED AND PESSIMISTIC OVER PRG HANDLING OF THE FRENCH EXODUS. END SUMMARY.

1. AMCIT MARIE GREGORY AND SON PHILIPPE, THE DEPENDENTS OF RETIRED USAF COLONEL JOHN L. GREGORY, ARRIVED IN BANGKOK ON 22 AUGUST VIA THE FRENCH AIRLIFT FROM SAIGON. EMBOFF MET PLANE AND ESCORTED
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MRS. GREGORY TO BANGKOK. PHILIPPE TRAVELLED

ONWARD TO PARIS LATER ON 22 AUGUST. MRS. GREGORY, WHO LOST VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING SHE OWNED AFTER 25 YEARS IN VIETNAM--INCLUDING RINGS SHE WAS WEARING WHICH WERE 'LIBERATED' BY PRG TROOPS--REPEATEDLY WEPT AS SHE DESCRIBED IN HER NATIVE FRENCH THE PAST FOUR MONTHS IN SAIGON. DESPITE HER EMOTIONAL STATE, MRS. GREGORY INSISTED ON TALKING, HER FIRST CHANCE TO TALK WITHOUT FEAR SINCE APRIL, AS SHE PUT IT.

2. THE REMAINING AMERICANS IN SAIGON, WHOSE NUMBER MRS. GREGORY ESTIMATES AT ABOUT 65, ARE IN A BAD WAY. SOME ARE STAYING BEHIND TRYING TO OBTAIN EXIT VISAS FOR VIETNAMESE-BORN WIVES AND CHILDREN. PRG AUTHORITIES ARE NOT GIVING EXIT VISAS TO VIETNAMESE WIVES OF AMERICANS WHETHER THE HUSBAND IS STILL IN VIETNAME OR NOT. SCORES OF VIETNAMESE WIVES OF AMERICANS CROWD THE RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS DAILY IN SAIGON HOPING TO BE PUT ON THE FLIGHT MANIFEST OUT OF SAIGON. NONE IS ALLOWED TO LEAVE. EVEN VIETNAMESE HOLDERS OF US PASSPORTS ARE NOT BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE IF THE PASSPORT WAS ISSUED WITHIN THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

3. MRS. GREGORY CITED THE CASE OF ONE YOUNG AMERICAN, A MILITARY DESERTER, WHO HAS TAKEN VIETNAMESE CITIZENSHIP AND EARNS A PRECARIOUS LIVING AS A CYCLO (PEDICAB) DRIVER IN SAIGON. SHE SAID THAT EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE AMERICANS, IS HAVING A HARD TIME LIVING BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH FOOD IS RELATIVELY PLENTIFUL, NO ONE HAS MONEY WITH WHICH TO BUY FOOD. ONE US DOLLAR FETCHES 2,400 PIASTERS ON THE THRIVING BLACK MARKET VICE 755 PIASTERS PER DOLLAR PEGGED BY THE PRG.

4. THERE ARE MORE THAN 10,000 ASIANS CARRYING FRENCH PASSPORTS IN SAIGON INCLUDING ABOUT 2,000 EURASIANS. ALMOST ALL ARE BEING DENIED EXIT VISAS. A FEW WITH CONNECTIONS OR THROUGH BRIBERY ARE BEING PERMITTED TO LEAVE. MORE OFTEN, FAMILIES

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ARE BEING BROKEN UP AS HUSBANDS, AND OCCASIONALLY CHILDREN, LEAVE AND WIVES ARE LEFT BEHIND. MRS. GREGORY ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 200 EUROPEAN FRENCH LEFT IN SAIGON.

5. ON THE EVENING OF 21 AUGUST FRENCH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN SAIGON, DRUMETZ, TOLD MRS. GREGORY THAT HE IS VERY UNHAPPY WITH THE TREATMENT OF FRENCH

CITIZENS BY THE PRG, ESPECIALLY THE AUTHORITIES'
UNWILLINGNESS TO PERMIT THE ASIAN FRENCH TO LEAVE.
DRUMETZ SAID THERE IS HARDENDING OF FEELING TOWARDS
THE NORTHERNERS BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND THAT
THE VIET CONG NOW BELIEVE THEY WERE DUPED BY THE
NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THAT THEIR HOPES FOR AN
INDEPENDENT STATE IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE NOT BEING
REALIZED. HE ADDED THAT HE TOO IS FED UP WITH
VIETNAM AND HOPES TO LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WHITEHOUSE

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